

early acquired. He has been loyal to the muses. At their shrine, his ministry seems ever free and sacred, wholly apart from the ordinary associations of life. With a pure heart and a lofty purpose, he has hymned the glory of nature and the praise of freedom. As he went forth alone to muse at eventide, the reveries of genius have been to Ryan, holy and private seasons; there is no mystical lore in the tributes of his muse, all is clear, earnest and thoughtful. Indeed, the same difference that exists between true-hearted, natural affections, and the metaphysical love of the Platonist, may be traced between the manly and sincere lays of Ryan, and the vague and artificial effusions of transcendental bards. Like all human beings, the burden of daily toil sometimes weighed heavily on his soul; the noisy activity of common life became hopeless; scenes of inhumanity, error, and suffering, grew oppressive; then he turned to the quietude and beauty of Nature for refreshment. There he loved to read the fresh tokens of creative beneficence. The umbrageous foliage swayed benignly around him. Vast prospects expanded his thoughts beyond the narrow circle of worldly anxieties. The limpid streams upon whose banks he wandered in childhood, reflected fleecy clouds, and soothed his heart as the emblem of eternal peace.

Thus faith was revived; the soul acquired new vitality, and the spirit of love was kindled again at the altar of God. A beautiful calm, like that which rests on the noble works of the sculptor, breathes from the harp of Ryan; he traces a natural phenomenon, or writes in melodious numbers, the history of some familiar scene, and then, with almost prophetic emphasis, utters to the charmed ear a high lesson on sublime truth.

Gifted must be the man who is loyal to so high a vocation. From the din

of outward activity, the vain turmoil of mechanical life, it is delightful and ennobling, to turn to a true poet,—one who scatters flowers along our path, and lifts our gaze to the stars,—breaking, by a word, the spell of blind custom, so that we recognize once more the original glory of the universe, and hear again the latent music of our own souls. This high service has Ryan fulfilled. It will identify his memory with the loveliest scenes of his native land, and endear it to her children forever.

There is no branch of literature that can be cultivated in a republic with more advantage to the reader, and satisfaction to the author, than History. Untrammelled by proscription, and unawed by political authority, the amalest may trace the events of the past, and connect them, by analogy, with the tendencies of the present, free to impart the glow of honest conviction to his record, to analyze the conduct of leaders, the theory of parties, and the significance of events. The facts, too, of our history, are comparatively recent. It is not requisite to conjure up fabulous traditions or explore the dim regions of antiquity. There are relations however, both to the past and future, which render American history the most suggestive episode in the annals of the world, and give it a universal as well as a special dignity.

A backward glance at the state of the early colonies, shows us that the Catholics were the most active pioneers of discovery.

The Spanish and French immigrants to America made strenuous efforts for the conversion of Indians to christianity. This is particularly true of the French. It was their untiring zeal for the spread of the gospel that lead their priests to penetrate those vast regions of western wilderness, till then untrodden by the foot of civilized man. The history of christianity presents no